Parsism/Zoroastrianism

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Introduction

Zoroastrianism is an ancient Aryan religion which originated in Persia more than 2500 years ago. Though it has relatively few adherents, less than one hundred and thirty thousand in the whole world, it is one or the oldest religions. The Iranian Prophet Zoroaster was the founder of Zoroastrianism (also commonly known as Parsiism). The sacred scripture of the Parsies is the Dasatir and Avesta.

Concept of God in Parsism/Zoroastrianism

1. **God in Zoroastrianism is known as 'Ahura Mazda'.**

   'Ahura' means 'the Lord' or 'The Master' and 'Mazda' means 'the Wise'; hence 'Ahura Mazda' means 'the Wise Lord' or 'the Wise God'. Ahura Mazda stands for God, in a strictly monotheistic sense.

   Qualities of God according to the Dasatir:

   According to the Dasatir, Ahura Mazda has the following qualities:

   a. He is One.
   b. He is without an origin or end.
   c. He has no father or mother, wife or son.
   d. He is without a body or form.
   e. Nothing resembles Him.
   f. Neither the eye can behold Him, nor the power of thinking can conceive Him.
   g. He is above all that you can imagine.
   h. He is nearer to you than your own self.

2. **Qualities of God according to Avesta**

   According to the Avesta, the Gathas and the Yasna give various characteristics to Ahura Mazda such as:

   a. **Creator – Yasna 31:7 & 11**
      Yasna 44:7
      Yasna 50:11
      Yasna 51:7

   b. **Most Mighty – the Greatest**
      Yasna 33:11
      Yasna 45:6

   c. **Beneficent – Hudai.**
      Yasna 33:11
      Yasna 48:3

   d. **Bountiful – Spenta;**
      Yasna 43:4,5,7,9,11,13,15
      Yasna 44:2
      Yasna 45:5

Yasna 46:9
Yasna 48:3

Thus, in Zoroastrianism too, we find a concept of an eternal, omnipotent God. Several verses of Yasna praise the Lord as a Bountiful Creator.

Prophet Muhammad in Parsi Scripture

1. **Prophet Muhammad in Zend Avesta**

   It is mentioned in *Zend* Avesta *Farvardin Yasht* chapter 28 verse 129 (Sacred Books of the East, volume 23, *Zend Avesta* Part II pg. 220):

   "Whose name will be the Victorious, *Soeshyant* and whose name will be *Astvat-ereta*. He will be *Soeshyant* (The Beneficent one) because he will benefit the whole bodily world. He will be *Astvat-ereta* (he who makes the people, bodily creatures rise up) because as a bodily creature and as a living being he will stand against the destruction of the bodily (being) creatures to withstand the drug of the two footed brood, to withstand the evil done by the faithful (idolaters and the like and the errors of the Mazdaynians)".

   This Prophecy applies to no other person more perfectly than it does to Muhammad (pbuh):

   a. The Prophet was not only victorious at Fatah Makkah but was also merciful when he let go the blood thirsty opponents by saying:

      "There shall be no reproof against you this day".

   b. *Soeshyant* means the ‘praised one’ (refer Haisting’s Encyclopedia), which translated in Arabic means Muhammad (pbuh).

   c. *Astvat-ereta* is derived from the root word *Astu* which in Sanskrit as well as in *Zend* means ‘to praise’. The infinitive *Sitaudan* in present day Persian means praising. It can also be derived from the Persian root word *istadan* which would mean ‘one who makes a thing rise up’. Therefore *Astvat-ereta* means the one who praised, which is the exact translation of the Arabic word *'Ahmed'* which is another name for Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). The Prophecy clearly mentions both the names of the Prophet i.e. Muhammad (pbuh) and Ahmed (pbuh).
   d. The Prophecy further says that he will benefit the whole bodily world and the Qur’an testifies this in Surah Al-Anbiya chapter 21 verse 107:

      "We sent thee not, but as a mercy for all creatures." [Al-Qur'an 21:107]

2. **Sanctity of Prophet’s Companions**

   In Zend Avesta Zamyad Yasht chapter 16 verse 95 (Sacred Books of the East, volume 23 Zend Avesta Part II pg. 308):

   "And there shall his friends come forward, the friends of *Astvat-ereta*, who are fiend-smitting, well thinking, well-speaking, well-doing, following the good law and whose tongues have never uttered a word of falsehood."

   a. Here too Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is mentioned by name as *Astvat-ereta.*

   b. There is also a mention of the Prophet’s friends as companions who will be fighting the evil; pious, holy men having good moral values and always speaking the truth.

This is a clear reference to the *Sahabas* – the prophet's companions.

3. **Prophet Muhammad in Dasatir**

   The sum and substance of the prophecy mentioned in Dasatir is, that when the Zoroastrian people will forsake their religion and will become dissolute, a man will rise in Arabia, whose followers will conquer Persian and subjugate the arrogant Persians. Instead of worshipping fire in their own temples, they will turn their faces in prayer towards *Kaaba* of Abraham (pbuh) which will be cleared of all idols. They (the followers of the Arabian Prophet), will be a mercy unto the world. They will become masters of Persia, *Madain*, *Tus, Balkh*, the sacred places of the Zoroastrians and the neighbouring territories. Their Prophet will be an eloquent man telling miraculous things.

   This Prophecy relates to no other person but to Muhammad (pbuh)

4. **Muhammad will be the Last Prophet**

   It is mentioned in Bundahish chapter 30 verses 6 to 27 that *Soeshyant* will be the last Prophet implying that Muhammad (pbuh) will be the last Prophet. The Qur'an testifies this in Surah Ahzab.

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Messenger of Allah, and the Seal of the Prophets: and Allah has full knowledge of all things." [Al-Qur'an 33:40]